

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Social Services



ONS TRANSMITTAL NUMBER 07-01

Date: February 1, 2007

☒ ACTION ITEM

☐ INFORMATIONAL ITEM

Subject: Work Requirements for Refugees Receiving Food Stamps

To: ONS Resettlement Provider Directors

From: Kathy A. Cooper 
Virginia State Refugee Coordinator
Virginia Office of Newcomer Services

Contact: Penny Boyd [penny.boyd@dss.virginia.gov] or 804-726-7933

Terms Used in This Transmittal

FSET	Food Stamp Employment and Training Program
LDSS	local department of social services
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Family
VIEW	Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare
VDSS	Virginia Department of Social Services

Some refugees who receive food stamps are subject to the work requirements of both the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program and the Refugee Resettlement Program. This can lead to duplication of effort for the two programs' staff and confusion for the refugee. The Office of Newcomer Services and the FSET Program have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding work requirements for refugees participating in both programs.

This Transmittal is intended to:

1. Explain the new requirements; and
2. Ask that you meet with the FSET managers in local departments of social services (LDSS) where you resettle refugees for the purpose of establishing local procedures to accomplish these requirements.

Background

Both the TANF and Food Stamp Programs have work requirements. The TANF work program is called Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW). The food stamp work program is the FSET Program. FSET requirements are different from VIEW requirements because each program is regulated by a different federal agency. (The U.S. Department of Agriculture regulates the FSET Program. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulates the VIEW Program.) If a refugee receives both TANF and food stamps, participation in VIEW meets the food stamp work requirement. If a refugee receives food stamps and does *not* receive TANF, participation in FSET is required.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved Virginia's FSET program request that a refugee's participation in ONS-contracted employment activities meet FSET participation requirements.

FSET is not offered by all LDSSs (see chart below). Only refugees receiving food stamps from LDSSs participating in FSET are subject to FSET requirements. For this reason, only resettlement providers who serve refugees receiving food stamps from the LDSSs listed below are affected by this Transmittal.

Action Needed:

1. Review the attached memorandum from Faye Palmer, FSET Program Manager.
2. Schedule a meeting with the FSET program managers in the LDSSs where refugees are resettled. Work with them to develop practical operational procedures for your two agencies. (VDSS provides statewide guidance on policy and procedural issues to LDSSs. Statewide guidance requires standardization. Flexibility is most effectively accomplished at the local level as implementation strategies are made.)
3. Use the Implementation Hints attached to Faye Palmer's memorandum when meeting with the LDSSs.

Note: Penny Boyd is available to facilitate these meetings if it would be helpful to you. Her contact information is given on the previous page.


LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES WITH FSET PROGRAMS		
Alexandria	Henry/Martinsville	Roanoke City
Arlington	King and Queen	Roanoke County
Bristol	Newport News	Rockbridge/Lexington/Buena Vista
Brunswick	Norfolk	Smyth
Chesapeake	Pittsylvania	Surry
Danville	Portsmouth	Tazewell
Fairfax	Prince William	Virginia Beach
Hampton	Richmond City	Wythe

Note: This and all ONS transmittals are posted at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ons/transmittals.cgi>

Memorandum

Date: February 6, 2007

To: Local Departments of Social Services FSET and Food Stamp Eligibility Staff

From: Faye Palmer, FSET Program Manager 

Subject: **Employment and Training Requirements for FSET Mandatory Refugees**

Contact: Faye Palmer at faye.palmer@dss.virginia.gov

Terms Used

FSET = Food Stamp Employment and Training Program
LDSS = local department of social services
CRP = comprehensive resettlement plan

NOTE (1) WHEN USED IN THIS MEMORANDUM, THE TERM *REFUGEE* INCLUDES REFUGEES, ASYLEES, CUBAN/HAITIAN ENTRANTS, AMERASIANS, AND VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING. (2) THIS MEMORANDUM ADDRESSES FSET REQUIREMENTS FOR REFUGEES RECEIVING SERVICES FROM REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROVIDERS UNDER CONTRACT WITH THE OFFICE OF NEWCOMER SERVICES. (NOT ALL REFUGEES WHO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS ARE RECEIVING SERVICES FROM A REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROVIDER UNDER CONTRACT WITH THE OFFICE OF NEWCOMER SERVICES.)

This memorandum provides policy guidance to food stamp eligibility and FSET staff serving FSET mandatory refugees who receive employment services from refugee resettlement providers under contract with the Office of Newcomer Services.

Some refugees who receive food stamps currently are subject to the work requirements of both the FSET Program and the Refugee Resettlement Program. The procedures explained in this memorandum are intended to reduce duplication of effort for the two programs' staff.

With the concurrence of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, effective immediately, a refugee's participation in the Refugee Resettlement Program's employment and training program will meet FSET participation requirements *when the conditions set out in this memorandum are met.*

Background

The Refugee Resettlement Program is authorized and funded by the federal government. Its purpose is "to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible" after arrival. The Office of Newcomer Services administers the program through

contracts with local refugee resettlement providers. These providers are public and private agencies that are contractually responsible for providing job search and job placement assistance to refugees in a cultural and linguistic appropriate manner.

A *resettlement case manager* assists refugees with housing, food, shelter, and *etcetera*. The case manager develops a comprehensive resettlement plan (CRP) for each refugee. The CRP is a tool that identifies the refugee's needs and competencies; develops strategies for the attainment of self-sufficiency; and outlines an employment plan.

A *resettlement employment worker* assists each adult refugee in finding employment.

FSET Procedures for Refugees

The *resettlement case manager* (or a designee) will assist the refugee with the food stamp application process and the food stamp application interview.

The food stamp application process requirements for refugees are as follow:

- A *resettlement case manager* (or a designee) will give the food stamp intake worker contact information for the *resettlement employment worker*.
- The food stamp intake worker will include this contact information in the referral to the FSET worker.
- The food stamp intake worker will follow existing policy to obtain consent for the LDSS to share information about the refugee's food stamp case with the resettlement staff.

The FSET intake and monitoring process requirements for refugees is as follows:

- FSET staff will inform the *resettlement employment worker* of the refugee's FSET intake interview date and time.
- The *resettlement employment worker* (or a designee) will accompany the refugee to the FSET intake interview and will bring a copy of the employment section of the refugee's CRP.
- An FSET Plan of Participation will not be required. The employment section of the refugee's CRP, outlining an employment plan for that individual, is sufficient to meet the FSET Plan of Participation requirement. (A copy of that section will be maintained by the LDSS FSET worker in the participant's file.)
- The work requirements imposed by refugee resettlement providers will substitute for the FSET participation requirements.

- A monthly breakdown of component activities and participation hours is not required to be maintained by the LDSS FSET worker, as this data is kept in the refugee resettlement agency files. (Refugee employment activities under the Refugee Resettlement Program meet and exceed FSET requirements.)
- FSET monitoring of component activity is not required. The resettlement provider will notify FSET staff if the client is not participating in work or employment and training activities.
- If, at the time of the FSET intake interview, the client is not able to participate in employment or training activities due to a temporary medical problem, the FSET worker will place the refugee in pending or inactive status until notified by the resettlement provider that the refugee is participating in employment activities.
- When the client obtains employment, the *resettlement employment worker* will notify the FSET worker immediately. The employment is counted statistically by both programs.
- The FSET worker is responsible for informing other LDSS eligibility staff of the employment.

Both the FSET and Refugee Resettlement Programs have a responsibility for limited support services and both have insufficient funding to meet all service needs. Delivery of supportive services will be determined jointly by the two agencies.

Implementation Assistance

It is recommended that FSET program managers meet with resettlement program managers to discuss the practical application of these procedures locally. Attached are "Implementation Hints" for your use in these meetings. Also attached is a list of the ONS contract agencies. Penny Boyd, ONS Policy Specialist, and I are available to facilitate these meetings if it would be helpful. My information is on page 1. Penny can be reached at penny.boyd@dss.virginia.gov or 804-726-7933.

Attachments (2)

Attachment 1

Implementation Hints for Local FSET Managers and Local Refugee Resettlement Managers

WRITTEN PROCEDURES DESCRIBING HOW THIS MEMORANDUM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

Each local department of social services and resettlement provider is to meet and develop internal procedures for implementing rules and requirements set forth in this memorandum. These procedures should address:

- ✓ How resettlement staff will give contact information to the food stamp intake worker that will allow the FSET worker to inform the resettlement case manager of the initial FSET assessment interview
- ✓ Any special communications needed to arrange an initial assessment date convenient for all parties involved
- ✓ An explanation of the employment section of the CRP that will be provided to the FSET worker
- ✓ The methods by which the resettlement staff will inform the FSET worker of refugee's employment, non-cooperation, address change, or case closure.

NOT ALL REFUGEES PARTICIPATE IN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

Resettlement services for *newly* arrived refugees include housing, education, language, transportation, and employment. *Employment is the primary service provided.* Service provision is intense for the first few months after arrival and decreases as refugees integrate into the communities in which they reside. Intensive resettlement assistance is available, but normally not provided after initial resettlement. Refugees who apply for or are receiving food stamps after initial resettlement are subject to the Food Stamp employment and Training participation requirements IF they are not actively participating in a refugee resettlement employment activity. It is the resettlement provider's responsibility to inform FSET staff if the refugee is participating in a resettlement sponsored employment activity.

Attachment 2



**Virginia Department of Social Services
Office of Newcomer Services
Refugee Resettlement Service Providers**

Alexandria Office of Employment Training/Job Link

1900 N. Beauregard St., Suite. 300

Alexandria, VA 22311

General Phone: (703) 838-4316

FAX: (703) 838-4057

Contacts:

Joseph Stevens, OET Director, (703) 838-4479, x206

Lenwood Roberts, Program Manager, (703) 838-4479, x225

Rahim Aziz, Case Manager, (703) 838-4479, x227

Arlington Diocese Office of Resettlement

80 North Glebe Road

Arlington, VA 22203

General Phone: (703) 841-3876

FAX: (703) 524-2741

Contacts:

Seyoum Berhe, Director

sberhe@arlingtonrefugeeservices.com

Abdi Dahir, Manager

aabdulla@arlingtonrefugeeservices.com

Arlington Diocese Office of Resettlement

13807 Poplar Tree Road

Chantilly, VA 20151-2514

General Phone: (703) 266-8972

FAX: (703) 524-2154

Contact: Mary Anne Ondrey

mondrey@arlingtonrefugeeservices.com

Arlington Diocese Office of Resettlement

6245 Leesburg Pike, Suite 315

Falls Church, VA 22044

General Phone: (703) 533-5746

FAX: (703) 524-2741

Contact: Abdilahi Mohamed, Employment Specialist

amohamed@arlingtonrefugeeservices.com

Arlington Diocese Office of Resettlement

Fredericksburg United Methodist Church

308 Hanover Street

Fredericksburg, VA 22401

General Phone: (540) 834-0074

FAX: (540) 372-4021

Contact: Munira Marlowe

mmarlowe@arlingtonrefugeeservices.com

Refugee & Immigration Services

(Richmond Regional Office)

Catholic Diocese of Richmond

1512 Willow Lawn Drive, Suite. A

Richmond, VA 23230

General Phone: (804) 355-4559

FAX: (804) 355-4697

Contacts:

Marilyn Breslow, Exec. Director

mbreslow@richmonddiocese.org

Carol McElhinney, Richmond Office Director

cmcelhinney@richmonddiocese.org

Refugee & Immigration Services

(Hampton Roads Regional Office)

Catholic Diocese of Richmond

1615 Kecoughtan Road

Hampton, VA 23661

General Phone: (757) 247-3600

FAX: (757) 247-1070

Contact: Karen Kurilko, Regional Office Director x13

kkurilko@richmonddiocese.org

**Refugee & Immigration Services
(Roanoke Regional Office)
Catholic Diocese of Richmond**
1106 9th Street, SE
Roanoke, VA 24013
General Phone: (540) 342-7561
FAX: (540) 344-7513
Contact: Barbara Smith, Regional Office Director x12
barbaraS22@ris-roa.org

International Rescue Committee
609 East Market Street, Suite 104
Charlottesville, VA 22902
General Phone: (434) 979-7772
FAX: (434) 979-8161
Contacts:
Susan Donovan, Director
susan.donovan@theiirc.org
Monte Hackney (VNIS)
monte.hackney@theiirc.org

**Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital
Area Refugee and Immigrant Services**
7401 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22043
General Phone: (703) 698-5026
FAX: (703) 698-6233
Contacts
Sarah Krause, Program Director x138
krauses@lssnca.org
Janelle Banta, Program Coordinator x135
bantaj@lssnca.org

**Virginia Council of Churches
Refugee Resettlement Program**
1214 W. Graham Road, Suite 3
Richmond, VA 23220
General Phone: (804) 321-3305
FAX: (804) 321-8427
Contacts:
Richard Cline, Director x109
cline@vcc-net.org
Ed Haurand, Deputy Director x112
ehaurand@vcc-net.org
John Javed, Program Coordinator x114
jjaved@vcc-net.org

**Virginia Council of Churches
Refugee Resettlement Program**
281 East Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
General Phone: (540) 433-7942
FAX: (540) 432-0238
Contact: Viktor Sokolyuk, Program Coordinator
sokolyuk@vcc-net.org

**Virginia Council of Churches
Refugee Resettlement Program**
8800 Sudley Road
Manassas, VA 20110
General Phone: (703) 369-6101
FAX: (703) 335-6782
Contact: Carolyn Monroe, Program Coordinator
monroe@vcc-net.org

**Virginia Council of Churches
Refugee Resettlement Program**
372 Hiden Blvd., P.O. 6154
Newport News, VA 23606
General Phone: (757) 265-8605
FAX: (757) 265-8607
Contact: Teri Duddy, Contact
duddy@vcc-net.org